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CLIC PAPERS

**U.S. AID TO DEMOCRATIC STATES
FACING TOTALITARIAN REVOLUTIONARY
WARFARE: TWELVE RULES**

**Army - Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict
Langley Air Force Base, Virginia**

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TOTALITARIAN REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE: TWELVE RULES**

by
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**Army-Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict
Langley Air Force Base, Virginia 23665-5000**

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PREFACE

The principles discussed in this paper are for allies of the US who are in revolutionary situations and reliant on substantial US assistance in meeting the diplomatic, economic, psychological, and military challenges of revolutionary warfare. These rules do not apply to situations in which a "quick strike" fix by US armed forces is called for, as was the case in Grenada. Instead, it applies to those situations in which the revolutionary struggle is protracted and the overall likelihood of armed US intervention is extremely small. As in all such cases, these rules are not absolute but merely guideposts for nations struggling to divine the strengths and weaknesses of American political, military, and economic support.

The twelve rules are as follows. (1) World opinion is a critical factor and it holds the US to a higher ethical standard than any other nation in the conduct of international relations. (2) Total and protracted struggle is fundamental in internal defense. (3) Psychological operations are the battleground in internal defense operations. (4) Control of borders must be established. (5) The soldier and the militia must work with the people to develop the intelligence and the empathy required. (6) Active involvement of the people with the government must be organized to the last individual or the guerrillas will organize the people against the government. (7) Maintenance of the social order requires effective population control. All democratic states must suspend some rights during revolutionary war. (8) Once an insurgency starts, a leader who is unwilling or unable to find ways to achieve a more equitable economic order must rely on brutal repression as the only option. (9) There is no long-term planning without long-term funding. (10) Don't let military leaders ask for and don't accept military equipment which cannot be economically supported. (11) Visible foreign presence is counterproductive in a strategy of protracted defense against insurgency. (12) Get trade, not aid.

**US AID TO DEMOCRATIC STATES FACING
TOTALITARIAN REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE: TWELVE RULES**

Introduction

The principles enunciated below are for allies of the United States who are in revolutionary situations and reliant on substantial US assistance to meet the diplomatic, economic, psychological, and military challenges of revolutionary warfare. These rules do not apply to situations in which a "quick strike" fix by US armed forces is called for, as was the case in Grenada, and the overall likelihood of armed US intervention is extremely small. As in all such cases, these rules are not absolute, but merely guideposts for nations struggling to divine the strengths and weaknesses of American political, military, and economic support.

RULE 1: World opinion is a critical factor, and it holds the US to a higher ethical standard than any other nation in the conduct of international relations.

World opinion is a critical element in US aid programs. It holds democratic states, and above all the US, to a higher ethical standard of conduct than totalitarian states, such as the Soviet Union or Iran. This same world opinion demands ethical consistency between the foreign and internal policies of democracies but applies no such standard to totalitarian states.

Thus, the release by the US of an innocuous field manual to guerrillas fighting for pluralist democracy in Nicaragua triggered an international uproar over this alleged contribution to human rights abuses in guerrilla-held territory. At the same time, the critics are muted on the matter of the application of Soviet-supplied chemical weapons in the Vietnamese campaign of genocide against the Laotian hill people. Nor are the critics as vocal about the assassination of South Korean government officials in neutral Burma by North Korean commandos as they are about the nonlethal use of US-manufactured cattle prods by the South Korean police in confrontation with violent demonstrators.

Perhaps a major factor in this phenomenon is that a free press, fundamental to democratic society, is separate from and will not align itself with the democratic government in matters of perceived government abuse. At the same time, the press in a totalitarian state is the loyal servant of that state and cannot perceive or dare to articulate fact or opinion about the more bestial aspects of its masters. In democratic states, the press (meaning the entire news media) is a major conduit, alongside free elections, through which the people exert pressure on and control the government. In totalitarian states, the press serves

the opposite role of being a conduit through which the opinions of the government are impressed upon the people. It is for these reasons that world opinion matters to US policymakers and that such opinion exhibits bias against the US and other democracies. It is also for these reasons that allies of the US must consider the context of world opinion in assessing the potential or actual role of US assistance programs.

RULE 2: Total and protracted struggle is fundamental in internal defense.

In foreign internal defense, the total internal and external defense matrix must be addressed over time. This matrix includes conventional military confrontation, economic warfare, psychological warfare, international political (e.g., diplomatic) struggle, and terrorism. This total struggle follows different rules in societies which aspire to democracy, such as El Salvador, and those which are totalitarian, such as Nicaragua.

Democratic societies must abide by the rule of law, a notion derived from Western Humanism, in the conduct of internal and foreign affairs. Such consistency is not expected of most antihumanist, totalitarian societies. In democratic societies, rule is by law developed through consensus. There is deep felt concern for individual human rights, and there is a common sense of private immunities from governmental intrusion. The totalitarian societies are ruled by draconian decree, there is low regard for the needs of the individual, and state policy is that no one is politically innocent. Because of these differences, the use of terror (including assassination of domestic and foreign political adversaries) and the taking and abuse of political prisoners are acceptable to the totalitarians but not to the democrats. This is also why negotiation and coalition (accommodation) are one-way streets with the totalitarians. It is a fact that a country which is in the midst of revolution and believes that totalitarians negotiate in good faith is a country doomed to extinction.

The totalitarians are thus unrestrained to engage in no-holds-barred total struggle. They are also free to use tactics that cannot be duplicated or fully countered by a democratic adversary. They know full well that democratic states cannot advocate terrorism, that assassination is proscribed in the democracies by laws and ethical precepts such as are manifest in the US Executive Order 12333, US Intelligence Activities, and that no such limits are placed on totalitarians.

Thus, an aspirant democracy undergoing attack from the totalitarians must realize that the enemy will wage total war. At the same time, the aspirant must take note that American largess has ethical strings that limit the range of options otherwise open to the aspirant and practically dictate protracted response to totalitarian onslaughts from within and without.

Furthermore, these ethical constraints and the manner in which totalitarians wage war mean that the attacked must engage in two revolutions at once. Simultaneous with the tactical military struggle, there must be a political-social struggle against social inequities, corruption, and other social ills feeding the totalitarian fire.

RULE 3: Psychological operations are the battleground in internal defense operations.

The "key terrain" in a national insurgency is the populace. The ultimate strategic target of insurgency is the collective mind of the populace, or as some term it, the "national will." Similarly, operational and tactical targets are the minds of operational and tactical leaders of the opposition, including members of the US Congress who pass on specific foreign aid requests. A successful psychological attack can be decisive. For once the leadership or the general populace is convinced that further conflict is futile, or that the current government has lost the mandate to govern, the war is over. When sanctuaries exist and the psychological will to exist as a nation remain, revolutionary war is never over, regardless of who controls what geographic terrain. For these reasons, it is a mistake to view psychological operations as just one of the tools used in internal defense.

Every action or reaction by the government affects the government's ability to maintain the direction of the national will and, thus, the eventual outcome of internal conflict. Although "propaganda" has a pejorative connotation in some circles of the US Government and the American populace at large during times of "peace," it is instructive that Americans have made extensive and highly successful use of psychological operations during national emergencies such as the Revolution, the Civil War, and World War II.

RULE 4: Control of borders must be established.

The "domino theory" that originated in the post-World War II conflicts in Southeast Asia was based on the inescapable fact that a government that cannot control its borders cannot control its country. The Soviet "Iron Curtain" and the Berlin Wall attest to the realization of this by communist authorities. The lack of border control directly contributed to the fall of pro-West or neutralist regimes in Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. The present conflict in El Salvador is exacerbated by a classic lack of control over that country's land, air, and sea boundaries. Similarly, the US is awash with morale-breaking quantities of illicit drugs that freely enter the country without serious impediment through porous borders.

Successful border control is more easily written about than practiced. There are, nonetheless, several historical examples that may be helpful for a nation facing revolution fostered from across its borders. As British experiences in Malaya and Northern Ireland show, extensive patrolling, tracking, close surveillance, and ambushing can make even the densest forest or thickest jungle a practical and psychological barrier for infiltrators. The judicious integration of ground, maritime, and airborne electronic sensors, secret agents, and informers on both sides of the border with the ground forces can potentially create a seamless web through which the infiltration of personnel, supplies, and equipment for insurgents will be extraordinarily difficult.

RULE 5: The soldier and the militia must work with the people to develop the intelligence and the empathy required.

In revolutionary war, the normal divisions between the military and the general populace are easily worsened. The military is classically organized, trained, equipped, and deployed to close with and destroy enemy conventional, military formations. A classic mistake in counterinsurgency is to escalate what should be essentially a police response to a military response. Often, when the enemy is intermingled with the civilian population, grievous excesses occur, including the death or injury of innocents, which can decisively polarize the military and the populace it is supposed to protect.

Civic action projects can bring the military and the populace closer together in common cause, where the military aids the civilians in building needed schools, roads, and other projects of long-range effect that will be there long after the military has left the community. The impact of this effort adds to the total mobilization of the society behind the government. It is important to note that the priorities of civic action projects must be those perceived by the populace at the local level and not those of a faceless bureaucrat or military commander. What appears important to the bureaucracy and the military may be at variance with local sentiment.

RULE 6: Active involvement of the people with the government must be organized to the last individual or the guerrillas will organize the people against the government.

Democracies, with their emphasis on individual freedom, often fail to appreciate the principles of "total organization," by which totalitarian revolutionaries seek to involve "the masses" in their struggle. Democratic societies tend to draw circles or organizations that leave the masses out. Lack of appreciation of this principle is a grievous error in past US attempts to train and assist counterinsurgency forces of friendly states. Witness the failure to mobilize the South Vietnamese until very late in the war. The entire population must be

organized (but not necessarily militarized) into an interlocking counterinsurgency effort, from active duty national armed forces to village constables and militia and from the highest circles of government to the simplest patriotic volunteer organizations.

Part and parcel of the total organization of the masses, the democratic or near-democratic state must develop its own leadership and expertise that is beholden to the central government, lest it fall prey to the tendency of some states under pressure to rely on foreigners. Development of in-country leadership and expertise is essential to the successful mobilization of the masses. For example, the emergence of President Duarte as a genuine political leader in El Salvador has been essential to inspiring average Salvadoran to support government counterinsurgency efforts.

RULE 7: Maintenance of the social order requires effective population control. All democratic states must suspend some rights during revolutionary war.

Totalitarian insurgency is designed to destroy the very fabric of the societies attacked. A government under attack must therefore establish total accountability of the entire population and resource base to successfully detect insurgent activities and to preclude insurgent parallel organization. Rationing, block wardens, and family censuses are some measures used to insure people and resources are available to the government's counterinsurgency effort and not to the insurgency. Such measures will undoubtedly raise objections from some members of the American and Western democratic leadership and from the media. One will note, however, that the histories of the democracies are replete with suspensions of civil liberties during national peril. A classic example is the suspension of habeas corpus during the American Civil War by the great President Abraham Lincoln.

Effective population control requires effective police who are drawn from, and are reflective of, their communities. In developing effective police forces, a government under attack should expect no help from the US, however, because prevailing attitudes in the US maintain that the police are ipso facto constant violators of human rights. At present, Congress has made it very difficult for US money, equipment, and personnel to be applied toward the building of more effective foreign police organizations. Effective police forces are essential to preservation of the respect and integrity of the government in the eyes of the people, and where they fail, insurgent "revolutionary justice" and vigilantism may prevail.

A note of caution, however, is that effective population control can lead to the establishment of rightist dictatorship, which in and of itself may boost the popular support of an insurgency. A system of checks and balances must be built into any population control system so that it is fair, as open as possible, and supported to the greatest extent by the populace. One way of accomplishing this is to have an independent judiciary (the South African judiciary is subordinate to the legislature) with the power of legislative and administrative review and a real and enforced bill of rights for the populace, so that government control is kept to a minimum consistent with the threat.

RULE 8: Once an insurgency starts, a leader who is unwilling or unable to find ways to achieve a more equitable economic order must rely on brutal repression as the only option.

Monopolar development of many Third World countries has lead to sharp social stratifications characterized by the emergency of a very wealthy and often (as in the case of Mexico) incestuous oligarchy in control of the country, a tiny middle class sometimes composed of a high percentage of foreign entrepreneurs, and an extremely large peasant class. A prime source of strength for revolutionary discontent is consciousness of the inequities such stratification entails among the masses. To remove this main resource of the insurgent, the leaders of the country under attack must redistribute wealth and generate new sources of income for those at the bottom of the social scale so that a greater number of people come to have a stake in the government.

The leaders of a country under attack are thus forced to ease the barriers of class and to promote economic and social egalitarianism. Often, the government must attack the interests of the rich, who are often the natural supporters of the government, or ways must be found to buy the rich out. Leaders who will not or cannot pursue such a course of action may instead have to rely on brutal repression of the populace and will ultimately be defeated by the resultant reaction.

The leaders must also generate new sources of wealth by creating new and small-scale industry that produces goods from local (and usually cheap) labor and raw materials and that will in fact be consistent and successful sources of revenue. Careful market planning and some government oversight are necessary to insure that white elephants are not created and that the revenues derived do not line the pockets of the few and the wealthy. Note that the wrong social cures, or the correct social cures poorly pursued, can destroy a government.

RULE 9: There is no long-term planning without long-term funding.

The US Congress is inherently incapable of long-range planning and has prevented the Executive from doing so by preventing long-range funding. A country threatened by insurgency cannot defend itself based on support of this nature. Therefore, the leadership of a country threatened by insurgency must design its strategy to rely on internal resources which can be committed over the long term. That a counterinsurgency campaign relying on internal resources and guided by long-term planning can succeed is illustrated by the efforts of Guatemala and Israel.

RULE 10: Don't let military leaders ask for and don't accept military equipment which cannot be economically supported.

There is a pronounced weakness among the military hierarchies of some Third World nations for flashy, high-technology weapons. It is often said that some of the military friends of the West in the Third World would equip their forces with Space Shuttles if they could get enough foreign aid to buy some. The point is that a lot of sophisticated military technology is counterproductive in counterinsurgency for two basic reasons. One is that such hardware usually is designed for general war among militarily advanced nations in Europe and is too sophisticated, with too many "bells and whistles," for low intensity conflict. Thus, where the insurgents are intermingled with the populace, the only thing a jet fighter-bomber can hit with any accuracy is the front page of The New York Times.

The second reason is that the investment in such sophisticated weaponry, and in particular the long-term expenses associated with maintenance and support, takes money away from more basic weapons and equipment (the proverbial "beans and bullets") that may ultimately make more of a difference in counterinsurgency. In lieu of supersonic jet fighter-bombers, it might make more sense for a nation undergoing revolution to invest in AC-3 "Puff" gunships.

This is not to say that a nation should go cheap when buying military equipment, for such can be just as bad as buying too richly. A story that has made the rounds in Latin America tells of an enterprising quartermaster who, to stretch limited American aid that was arriving sporadically with mood swings in Congress, bought his forces jungle boots made in Asia instead of going to his usual source dealing in boots of American manufacture. The Asian boots cost half as much as the American originals, and so the quartermaster bought twice as many pairs as he could have if he had purchased only American boots. The forces equipped with the Asian imitations, so the story goes, marched off to war and had their boots fall off their feet in 30 days. Those in the force who had worn boots of American manufacture still had more

than 2 months of wear remaining. In the end, all the Asian boots had to be replaced with the more durable American ones, nearly doubling what should have been a fairly modest investment in footwear. The moral of the story is that standards of performance, as derived from mission requirements, should be paramount over unit price and appearance when investing in military equipment.

RULE 11: Visible foreign presence is counterproductive in a strategy of protracted defense against insurgency.

It is critical to success in counterinsurgency that the government of the nation under attack maintain control of the counterinsurgency effort in appearance and in fact. The government must remember that foreign advisors are not seen by the populace as mere advisors, and that the overwhelming tendency on the part of foreign advisors is to exercise increasing control. The appearance of foreign advisors on the battlefield or in garrison is especially counterproductive and should be kept to an absolute minimum. Where they are necessary, foreign advisors and "liaisons" should keep very low profiles, and the host government must insist that all such advisors enter their country language- and culture-qualified. Israeli assistance to nations in Africa and Latin America is a model of the invisible foreign presence.

The very term "advisor" should be disdained, for such engenders ultimate blame for errant actions of the "advised" even when the advisor should not be held responsible. It is more than a semantic difference. Several times during the US involvement in Vietnam, for example, allegations of improper conduct on the part of South Vietnamese troops were "connected" to US advisory personnel by opponents of US policy in Southeast Asia, as though such misconduct would not have occurred but for the presence of such advisors. Where such a real or conjured nexus can be created, tremendous psychological and political forces can be brought to bear on the US decision-making process through which the overall form and content of aid to the recipient nation is determined. It is perhaps better to replace "advisors" with "trainers," thereby emphasizing the responsibility of the trained and avoiding the more immediate responsibility of the consultant or advisor.

RULE 12: Get trade, not aid.

If the national will of a country is to be sustained, it must be done with trade and not handouts. Good examples of halfhearted and counterproductive "handout diplomacy" abound in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Extending aid to any country or person engenders resentment and ultimately hatred, not undying gratitude. It follows that, to insure lasting relationships between the helper and the helped, mutually beneficial economic intercourse must be nurtured. An inherent difficulty, however,

is in insuring that the relationship is not centered on single industries or industries vulnerable to cyclic depression or minority exploitation. Ardent, but damaging, supporters of a government confronted with insurgency are often found among enriched social groups whose prosperity is based on the exploitation of single resources. Diversification of sources of trade and of ownership may thus be a condition precedent to success on the economic and social front.

Conclusion

The above stated rules are a good starting point for allies of the US who are otherwise bewildered by the twin challenges of revolutionary warfare and US political, military, and economic responses to such. They are meant to guide, and not direct, allies who are loathe to put the fate of their nation in the hands of foreigners. It is hoped that through such guidance more effective and efficient relations can be formed between the US and nations and peoples on the front line against totalitarianism.

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